

Text: Rev. 7:9-17

Title: "Heaven, Our Home"

Time: 8/6/2017 am

Place: NBBC

Intro: "A few weeks after the Battle of Fredericksburg (December 13, 1862), about 100,000 Federal soldiers and 70,000 Confederates were camped on opposite sides of the Rappahannock River in Virginia. The battle had been one of the bloodiest of the war so far. More than 12,000 Federals had been killed or wounded; Confederate losses numbered about 5,000. The two sides were still licking their wounds, each entertaining murderous thoughts about the other.

"As was customary in camp, at twilight the regimental bands on either side began their evening concerts. . . .

"Toward the end of the evening concerts, the music typically became more poignant and tender. On one particular night, a Federal band was especially melodic in its rendition of the Civil War's favorite tune. The slow, plaintive notes floated like feathers through the air, gently nestling into homesick hearts. Night was the time when men wrote home to their mothers and sweethearts, or held silent communion with themselves. The soothing notes sent the heartfelt words of the beloved song running through their minds:

"Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble there's no place like home!
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with else-
where:

Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home!

There's no place like Home.

"Almost as soon as the Union band began playing 'Home, Sweet Home,' Confederate bands took up the strain. One after another, every regimental band in both armies joined in. Everyone ceased what they were doing. Pens were put down; books were closed; games of tag stopped; cards drifted to the ground. There wasn't a sound, except for the music.

"Then, in the words of Frank Mixson, a private in the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, 'Everyone went crazy.' Mixson had not witnessed anything like it before. Both sides began cheering, jumping up and down and throwing their hats into the air. Mixson had never seen anything to compare with the wild cheering that followed the song's lingering notes. Had there not been a river between them, reflected Mixson, the two armies would have met face to face, shaken hands, and ended the war on the spot."

[<http://www.historynet.com/home-sweet-home-a-civil-war-soldiers-favorite-song.htm>; accessed 8/3/2017]

Like the Billy Yanks and Johnny Rebs of our nation's Civil War, the Church of Jesus Christ has always loved to sing about home:

"Sweet Hour of Prayer"

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!

May I thy consolation share,

Till, from Mount Pisgah's lofty height,

I view my **home** and take my flight.

"When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder"

On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in
Christ shall rise,
And the glory of His resurrection share;
When His chosen ones shall gather to their **home** beyond
the skies,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

“Amazing Grace”
Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me **home**.

I am sure that you can think of many other examples this morning of songs like that. But I do not think we can find a better description of our home in all the New Testament than the one we have in the passage before us this morning. It describes our home!

Notice with me three things this morning about “Heaven, Our Home”:

I. Our home is a place populated by an innumerable multitude (vv. 9, 13-14).

III: This morning we are part of a group of believers that is numerable. It would not take me long to count the participants in our assembly time here today. The angel who shall seal the 144,000, 12,000 from 12 tribes of Israel, will be able to count them. They too will be numerable. On the earth, believers are always numerable. They are always in the minority, the small crowd of the faithful.

Appl: But the heavenly home we share is a place populated by an innumerable gathering of believers. Not only are

they uncountable, they are also universal – from all over the world.

Ill: Two who share that home this morning are my Mom and my Dad's Aunt Elsa. I remember my mom's description of the time Aunt Elsa, who was Swiss German and spoke no English, tried to witness to her. All she could do was point to her Bible and repeat "Jesus, Jesus" to my mom, but my mom rejoiced to be able to say, "Yes, Jesus." They shared a heavenly home then, and today they share so much more there.

Appl2: There are some other things we all share as those who belong to this home. We are all clothed with white robes (v. 9). Those robes were made white in the blood of the Lamb (v. 14). Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Those who belong to the heavenly home believe that the blood of the Lamb has washed away all their sins.

Do you believe that? It does not matter what background you come from, Christ died so that His blood could wash you. Have you believed on Him? Have you asked Him by faith to wash you? Do you know you will be there as one of the multitude in white robes washed by the blood of the Lamb?

II. Our home is a place where God is glorified (vv. 10-12).

Ill: *Savior* was a common title used to praise the Roman Caesars. Earth is a place that glorifies the vanity of man and knows little to nothing of the glory of God.

Appl: But our home is a place where God is rightly glorified. He is called the Savior (v. 10). He is worshipped (vv. 11-12). Worship is a big part of glorifying God this way. The worship in this place requires humility - falling on one's face before God. It requires recognizing what God deserves credit for - glory, wisdom, power, and might. And it requires selfless gifts - thanksgiving and honor.

Do you find the place where God is glorified and worshipped to be like home? Or is it a strange and foreign place that you would rather not be?

III. Our home is a place protected from the ravages of sin (vv. 15-17).

III: Soldiers fight through the horrors of the battlefield seeking to keep those horrors from reaching the doorsteps of their own homes. Christ has won the battle over our sin and kept its ravages from reaching our home.

1. Heaven is protected from earth's sinful lack of service (v. 15a). The logical way verse 15 brings verse 14 to a conclusion is forceful in heaven - He died for us therefore we serve in His temple. But that logic is lost on many on earth because of selfishness and sin. Here it is said, "Although Christ died for me, I still serve myself." Our home is a place where that happens no more.

2. Heaven is protected from earth's sinful separation from God (v. 15b). The idea here is literally that God will tabernacle over His people in heaven our home. Jesus tabernacled among us (John 1:14). That was a great step in the right direction toward eliminating the separation between God and man. We saw His glory. He declared to us the Father.

But when we are home, God the Father will tabernacle over us. We will be forever under His wings. Earth is a place of sinful separation from God, lives lived in complete ignorance of His person and presence. Let's not live like earthlings, but draw near to our God and invite Him to spread His wings over every part of our lives.

3. Heaven is protected from earth's sinful suffering (vv. 16-17). How our loved ones who are there must pity us. Praying for the dead is not only unbiblical, it is strange. It is we who need the prayers. But we will not need them for long, because we too are going home soon. There is none of the suffering caused by sin there. Every tear is wiped from our eyes. Is heaven your home?

Conclusion: "In the Federal Army, officers eventually forbade their bands to play 'Home, Sweet Home' for fear it would make men so homesick they would desert or become too demoralized to fight. But they had nothing to worry about on that score. The song had just the opposite effect. In reminding them of their loved ones, 'Home, Sweet Home' reinforced the basic and personal stake each soldier had in fighting for his side" [*op. cit.*].

The Lamb gave John this revelation of our home, because He wants to reinforce in us our basic and personal stake in fighting for that home. He wants us to sing of it. He wants us to long for this home. He wants us to be encouraged that the loved ones we miss are at home there. He wants our affections to be on things above not on things on the earth, our treasures to be laid up there, not down here. He wants us to be pilgrims and strangers in this earth, which we should never make our home.

My Brother sang a song about our home at my ordination service in Danbury, CT. It is called, "Make Me A Stranger":

"Make me a stranger on earth, dear Savior,
Make me a stranger more like Thee.
Help me keep my focus on heavenly treasures,
And not on earthly things may it be.

"Lord, lead me onward as a pilgrim
Bound for heaven never to roam.
Make me a stranger on earth, dear Savior,
Till I see my heavenly home.

"Lord, I've found myself loving earthly treasures:
Simple pleasures taking your place.
Nothing can measure to heavenly treasures:
Hearing "Well done," and seeing Your face.

"Lord, lead me onward as a pilgrim
Bound for heaven never to roam.
Make me a stranger on earth, dear Savior,
Till I see my heavenly **home**."

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching